

Linda Clair
Meditation Retreat
Kallara Conference Centre, Australia – March 2020
Transcription from Audio Recordings

File 2C – Sunday afternoon discussion

Linda: You did the walking. Was it hard?

Question: No, not really. It felt a bit different coming in to the retreat as well, a bit less rigid. And I felt like I wanted to get up and so I did. The sittings have been quite intense as well.

Linda: In what way?

Question: Just a lot of pain, in my knees and mainly my bum. I've been feeling that energy more, when I'm working and meditating at home, and wanting to be more open to it. And I feel the pain, in the past and still is, is a strong conduit of that energy.

Linda: It forces you open. Do you get pain much at home when you're sitting?

Question: Not really, no; sometimes. I think I used to more than I do now.

Linda: Do you question this (the practice) much, what you're doing?

Question: Depends on the day. (laughs)

Linda: There's no right answer.

Question: Sometimes. Again, I feel less and less. When the pain is really intense and dry, you know, I definitely question whether I can do it. And when I see how much is involved in the whole thing I also question whether I can do it, and whether I have the endurance. Because it's like more is revealed as I go on. I look back three months or something and I was thinking then, "Oh, things are going well," you know.

Linda: Well, they were. They still are.

Question: Yeah, then I sort of...

Linda: When you start to realise what's involved that's a real sign of maturity. Because when you start off you can tend to feel, "Oh okay, I'll give it a few years, I'll put everything into it and I'll be enlightened." And then you start to see after a while, if you're still doing it, that this isn't a short-term thing. But it's too late to pull out now. I don't think you'd want to even if you could, but you can't now. Because once you've seen what's involved you can't pretend and you can't go back to how it was – and you wouldn't want to go back. But of course sometimes you're going to feel, "This is too much. I just want to be normal."

Question: Yeah, and I think that addictive feeling of the whole thing, it's hard to get away from that.

Linda: It's interesting you talked about the dryness of it. So that's one of the reasons, I feel, everyone needs to have a teacher and to sit in a group, because otherwise it can become a bit dry. You're just doing the practice every day. I know for me my teachers were my motivators, I suppose, my proof that it was possible, that I wasn't imagining it, I wasn't deluding myself, there were these people who had done it. And I went, "Why can't I do it?"

Question: Yeah, I definitely feel like contact with you is essential.

Linda: It is. It was essential for me, and I think it's essential for probably ninety nine per cent of people. And it's not so much me it's just what I embody; it's not me personally.

But the last few months, five months, you've proven you've got the endurance.

Question: But it's only five months!

Linda: Yes, but look what you've done in five months, how much you've changed in five months.

Question: Yes, a lot has happened. Did you feel that I was doubting myself?

Linda: No, not particularly. When I was going through it I didn't doubt myself so much as just get so tired I just wanted to have a rest. It just felt too much, overwhelmed by the whole thing, but I didn't really doubt myself. Not in an arrogant way, it was just, "I can do this. But ah, it's so hard."

Question: I think particularly at times where I feel like I'm reaching my limit, and coupled with noticing how much more there is, I think that is very confronting. How much more has to be...

Linda: Try not to look at that. Just keep raising that limit that you put on yourself, bit by bit, because it's only fear that limits you. There aren't really any limits. You think there are but there's not. It's interesting when you're sitting there and you're feeling this pain that feels sort of physical but it's not physical – it feels almost impossible to sit through. But then you do it and go, "Wow, that's amazing, I did it."

Question: When you were going through those periods of sitting with more intense pain – I notice how much that keeps me grounded and present. But if I do some shorter sits I feel like I can consciously be alert, consciously bring myself into my body and notice the thoughts, and there is a sort of quickening in that respect in those as well. But when the pain gets really overwhelming and really intense that can tend to go out the window.

Linda: Let it go out the window. It's actually doing more than anything that you consciously do. It's forcing you to be here, it's just wiping out everything. All you're doing is surviving when it's like that. Both are good, so do both, combine the two. Don't always extend and keep pushing those limits. Come back sometimes and do what you just described. Because then that shows you a bit more clearly where you are, and it becomes a bit too overwhelming if you keep sitting through that degree of intensity.

Question: What shows you more clearly where you are?

Linda: When you're sitting and you're able to consciously breathe, watch. And sometimes it's just good to enjoy it. There's nothing wrong with enjoying it. It's not like you have to keep pushing and it's terrible. Sometimes just sit, enjoy it, do the walking, really get into the walking. Really put a lot into the walking when you do it, don't see it as a break. I never really used the walking properly I feel, maybe I was never really taught to do it properly, I don't know, but I appreciate it much more now than I did years ago. So when you do the walking put everything into the walking. Just lift your feet as P. was saying, really be careful about your posture, looking down, as soon as you get distracted blur your vision so you're not focusing on anything or anyone. So use the mornings to sit through and then the rest of the day – well it's up to you what you do, but I'd say chop and change a bit.

Question: Okay. I've been feeling to do that and it did feel really different, and I wasn't sure what it was.

Linda: You've been looking different too. Yes, chop and change a bit. And don't be scared you're going to lose anything; you're not going to lose anything.

Question: I'm just scared I'll get complacent.

Linda: Well, be aware of being complacent. Don't be scared of it but just be very aware of everything that comes up. You start to feel a bit complacent – do something about it. Watch everything. Complacency can happen very quickly. So don't be scared of it but be aware of it, very aware of it. Never assume anything, you never know what's going to happen. There's no one feeling that you want to feel all the time. You can tend to think that, "All I want to feel is ecstasy for the rest of my life." But ecstasy is not what you think it is and ecstasy is not what this is about. It's not about feeling one thing, but being able to go through a myriad of different feelings in a minute and have no resistance, and never assuming anything. All those rules of how you used to behave – where this would happen and you feel this; this would happen and you feel this; I'm doing this to feel this – that all goes out the window. So you never know how you're going to feel. And that's why you need to stay as grounded and stable as possible, so you're able to let go of manipulating how you're going to feel, wanting to know how you're going to feel. That all becomes incredibly boring – "This happens and I laugh, and this happens and I cry." You just don't know, you can do anything, and you can change in an instant from laughing to serious, like a child does. So everything happens very quickly and you need to have that deep stability to be able to cope with that.

Question: Thankyou Linda.

Linda: You okay D.? You look a bit pale.

Question: Yes, I'm a bit pale. It's been a strong day.

Linda: Make sure you rest.

Question: I've gone really pink now.

Linda: You were white before.

Question: As you said it I felt white, but I've gone quite hot now.

Linda: Did you feel cold before?

Question: No, I've just been very upset this afternoon and everything you've been talking about with L. comes into it somewhere.

Linda: Well, it's not just for L., it's for everyone.

Question: It's very strong.

Linda: Make sure you rest, make sure you eat enough. It is very strong, it's incredibly strong.

Question: When you talk about endurance and the life of it, the enormity of it, I also just don't know, I haven't got a clue if I'm capable.

Linda: It's not a physical endurance. It's good to be reasonably physically okay – that can help you sitting and everything – but really it's not about age, it's not about sex, it's not about race. That doesn't need to mean anything. Everyone has got the endurance if they want it enough, and that's what gives you the endurance, that, "I want this more than anything."

Question: Well, that seems to be the case, but it's as if that *seems* to be the case rather than I *know* this is the case. In that I'm here and I've been here now for two years as much as I can be here, but I don't recognise an absolute drive in myself, it's just is a "happening" all the time. So I don't know whether I've got the push.

Linda: I would say you do. The drive doesn't need to be this, "Rrrr." It can be very even. It's there in you in a different way to someone else. And when I said to L. that he's got the endurance I didn't mean that he's been gardening for twelve hours a day and he's all fit and healthy and young. It's that he's doing that so he can do this, and he's prepared to put himself through a whole lot of discomfort and work to get enough money to do this. And you are putting this first.

Question: What seems to happen to me just before Kallara and in the first part is I get tremendously upset by almost everything. It doesn't take anything and I'm really, really upset and it can take me hours to breathe, count, see it, feel it. When you speak it's so simple and yet the upset that I go into is so ridiculously complex.

Linda: Don't worry about it. Just let yourself do that, and it can happen at the beginning of the retreat. I remember feeling like that at times too. This emotion would suddenly come over me and I just couldn't extricate myself from it – it was like this sticky, gooey stuff was there. But it's what's happening so don't see it as wrong, just allow it to be there. It's going to come up, particularly in a situation like this, so don't fight it, don't think you're being weak for being in this. Try not to judge yourself or anyone else or blame anything for it. Just sit with it as much as you can, allow it to be there but don't indulge in it too much. When it's this sticky give it time, just wait, and it always settles down after a couple of days anyway.

Question: Yes, it does always settle down. It's that thing of indulging and where the point is. Recently it's come and gone much faster, so that feels good.

Linda: I say it's simple, and I can say that now, but while I was going through it it didn't seem simple at all. There was all this stuff I had to watch and do. But once you're free from that you can't believe how simple the whole thing was. And you go, "Ah, it's all so simple and I realise what's going on." But before that, no, I couldn't see that it was simple – everything felt complicated.

Question: Sometimes when you speak the simplicity of it gets me somewhere and I recognise the simplicity, but then I carry on doing the complex.

Linda: So just allow it to go through, don't fight it. Use it as a motivation. This is why you're doing this.